

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2620

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, QA

SUBJECT: FORD MOTOR COMPANY IN QATAR-VISIT OF FORD REPRESENT-
ATIVES

REF: (A) DOHA 0538; (B) 76 DOHA 1235 AND PREVIOUS

1. ON MORNING OF MAY 21 FORD MOTOR COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES ADRAIN CASTILLO AND PETER PERRYMAN DISCUSSED FORD MOTOR COMPANY PLANS IN QATAR AND IN MIDDLE EAST WITH AMBASSADOR AND COMMERCIAL OFFICER. ACCORDING TO FORD REPS, NO DECISION HAS YET BEEN MADE ON QATARI AGENT FOR FORD. FORD REPS SAID THAT THEY WERE DISCUSSING AGENCY WITH COMPANIES NAMED IN REF B BUT WERE UNAWARE OF INTEREST OF AL ATTIAH MOTORS AND TRADING CO. MENTIONED IN REF A.

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2. FORD REPRESENTATIVES ARE WELL AWARE OF POSSIBLE PITFALLS IN CHOOSING AGENT FOR QATAR AND MENTIONED THAT THEY WERE FACING SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN OTHER GULF COUNTRIES. CONVERSATION SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT FORD IS LEANING TOWARD AL MANA TRADING COMPANY, WHICH IS OWNED BY OMAR AL MANA WHO HELD FORD AGENCY IN QATAR PRIOR TO FORD'S BEING PLACED ON BOYCOTT LIST.

3. IN MEETING BETWEEN COMMERCIAL OFFICER AND PERRYMAN EVENING OF MAY 21, PERRYMAN INDICATED THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH CONTENDERS FOR AGENCY WENT WELL AND THAT FORD WAS LEANING TOWARD AL MANA BUT THAT CASTILLO AND PERRYMAN HAD BEEN CIRCUMSPECT WITH AL MANA IN THE HOPE OF PUTTING PRESSURE ON AL MANA TO DROP HIS DISTRIBUTORSHIP OF PUGEOT. ACCORDING TO PERRYMAN THE FORD REPS LEFT AL MANA LESS SURE OF OBTAINING THE FORD AGENCY. PERRYMAN SAID THAT FORD WILL LET THE SITUATION REST FOR TWO MONTHS AND THEN RETURN TO SEE WHAT HAS DEVELOPED.

4. ON QUESTION OF OVERALL MIDDLE EAST OPERATIONS FORD REPS STATED THAT UP TO SIXTEEN AGENCIES WOULD BE OPENED IN MIDDLE EAST WHEN FORD IS REMOVED FROM BOYCOTT LIST "IN NEAR FUTURE". ACCORDING TO FORD REPS, BIGGEST PROBLEM WILL BE STAFFING SIXTEEN AGENCIES ADEQUATELY AND FINDING ENOUGH ARABIC SPEAKING PERSONNEL. OTHER PROBLEMS WILL INCLUDE SUPPLYING PARTS AND SETTING UP TRAINING AND SERVICE CENTERS. ACCORDING TO FORD REPS, THEY DO NOT INTEND TO SUPPLY ANY VEHICLES UNTIL ALL OTHER PARTS OF THEIR TRAINING AND SUPPLY PROGRAM ARE IN PLACE. THEY STATED THAT THEY INTEND TO KEEP LOCAL AGENTS ON SCHEDULE IN BUILDING AND STAFFING PROGRAMS AND THAT THEY HAD MADE THIS CLEAR TO CANDIDATES FOR AGENCY.

5. COMMENT: FORD REPS PLANS SEEM TO BE WELL THOUGHT-OUT AND THE REPS, AT LEAST, SEEM TO BE WELL VERSED IN PROBLEMS IN THE AREA AND SEEM CAPABLE OF ATTACKING PROBLEMS INTELLIGENTLY. THEY MAY HOWEVER BE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC IN THINKING THAT THEY CAN KEEP QATARI AND OTHER GULF AGENTS ON PREDETERMINED SCHEDULES.
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